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9 March 1970

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board and Staff

1. The time has come to set about reforming the annual military estimates, pursuant to the urging of the DCI and the concerns expressed by principal consumers. We must have a clear idea of what we intend to do, and how we intend to do it, well before the commencement of actual production this summer and fall. Accordingly, a working group is hereby set up, consisting of Messrs. Clark (Chairman) [redacted] (with others of the Staff as [redacted] sees fit). This group will have the responsibility for drawing up suggestions and a prospectus, but I hope that other members of the Board and Staff will give advice and assistance.

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2. Such guidance as we now have from consumers is contained in the letter of the Secretary of State (copy attached), in the results of a conference with Messrs. Marshall and Slocum of the White House Staff which I outlined at a recent Board meeting, and in the emphatic instruction of the DCI to achieve reform. We shall almost certainly get letters from the White House and the Secretary of Defense corresponding to that from the Secretary of State.

3. Three things seem already to emerge as desired by consumers:

a. A separate, summary estimate combining the subject-matter of NIE 11-8 and NIE 11-3 and designed for the highest level of policy-maker. (See the Secretary of State's letter, in this respect agreed to by Marshall and Slocum).

GROUP 1
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b. A considerable expansion of argument and evidence in the basic estimates.

c. On a lesser scale, inclusion of ASW material in NIE 11-3 instead of in NIE 11-14.

4. A few matters for consideration occur to me, but I submit them only as possible starting-points for discussion:

a. Should we still produce an 11-8 and an 11-3, or should the material be differently presented, e.g., in a larger number of separate papers? (Everyone does seem accustomed to the present system, and appears to expect it to continue.)

b. How can we make more explicit the distinction between fact and estimate, a matter which seems to worry people in the White House? Is there anything to be said for confining the estimates to those things which can be said on a basis of hard evidence?

c. What can we do by way of graphs, charts, maps, etc., in answer to the suggestion of the Secretary of State?

d. Annexes seem to be in order -- perhaps quite numerous ones. What goes into them, and when? How many and which could best be prepared in other offices and reviewed and tailored here? How much lead time must we allow?

e. Is it practicable to have (either in the text or in the annexes, or both) footnote references to technical or other studies issued by CIA, DIA, NSA, or even by a contractor?

f. What practical problems may arise in writing and coordinating the prospective types of estimates within the appointed deadline?

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5. The working group should aim at two things: (a) a preliminary report, oral or written, for some general discussion by the Board, by 1 April, and (b) by 1 May a fairly elaborate prospectus of at least one of the estimates - this should in my view include a complete outline, a finished draft of one or two sections of the text, with graphics, and a complete draft of one sample annex. (NOTE: there is no need to incorporate new intelligence -- the point is to illustrate the form and structure of the paper rather than the substance.)

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[redacted]

ABBOT SMITH
Director
National Estimates

Attachment

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